

REMARKS

This Amendment and Reply seeks to place this application in condition for allowance. Applicant has amended claim 10 to incorporate certain of the substance of allowable claim 36. Further, Applicant has rewritten allowed claims 40 and 43 to incorporate certain limitations of the base and intervening claims. No new matter has been added. Notably, the amendments were not motivated by patentability considerations in view of the prior art, including the art relied on in the outstanding Office Action.

In addition, four (4) new dependent claims have been added to more fully protect the inventions described and illustrated in the application. These claims are fully supported by the application as filed. No new matter has been added. Notably, should there be any question as to support for these amendments and/or the four new dependent claims, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Amendments to Claims

In an effort to expedite the prosecution of the application, the pending claims have been amended to protect certain of the inventions that were found to be allowable. No inference or conclusion should be drawn that Applicant agrees with the Examiner's characterization of, for example, Sulz (DE 20102051), Danish Patent DK 97 00453 and/or Kuhn et al. (U.S. Patent 4,017,698). Moreover, no inference or conclusion should be drawn that Applicant agrees with the rejections set forth in the Office Action. In an effort to provide a more concise response, Applicant does not comment on the rejections (including the positions/discussion of the references relating thereto) set forth in the Office Action. No inference or conclusion should be drawn that Applicant agrees with such rejections, or positions relating thereto (including the positions pertaining to the references).

Moreover, as for the rejected original claims, no inference or conclusion should be drawn that Applicant believes that such claims (independent or dependent) were unpatentable in view of the instant amendment notwithstanding this amendment.

Independent Claim 10 and Dependent Claims 11-17, 30, 32-35 and 37-39

Independent claim 10 has been amended to include certain patentable subject matter of claim 36. The Examiner found the subject matter of claim 36 to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. (Office Action, page 7, paragraph 8). As such, it is believed that independent claim 10, and dependent claims 11-17, 30, 32-35 and 37-39 are now allowable.¹

Independent Claim 40 and Dependent Claims 41 and 47

Claim 40 was found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. (Office Action, page 7, paragraph 8). Claim 40 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim (i.e., previous independent claim 10) and any intervening claims (of which there are none). Accordingly, it is believed that independent claim 40, and those claims that depend therefrom (i.e., claims 41 and 47), are now allowable.¹

Independent Claim 43 and Dependent Claims 44-46

Claim 43 was found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. (Office Action, page 7, paragraph 8). As such, claim 43 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim (i.e., previous independent claim 10) and any

¹ There are many patentable inventions described in the currently pending dependent claims. For the sake of brevity, this response does not present the additional reasons/bases that the dependent claims are patentable over the art of record, whether alone or in combination. Accordingly, no inference or conclusion should be drawn that Applicant's response to this rejection is exhaustive.

intervening claims (i.e., claim 42). Accordingly, it is believed that independent claim 43, and those claims that depend therefrom (i.e., claims 44-46), are now allowable.¹

Information Disclosure Statements

The Applicant appreciates the Examiner's review of the art presented in the Information Disclosure Statements submitted to date.

Fifth Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant has submitted, in a separate correspondence filed on August 2, 2007, a Fifth IDS. The documents listed on the modified Form PTO-1449 of the Fifth IDS were cited during the prosecution of an application related to the above-captioned application, namely U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 11/713,151.

For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the Fifth IDS (including Form PTO-1449) is attached hereto. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner make his consideration of the references identified in the Fifth IDS formally of record with the next action.

Sixth Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant has also submitted, in a separate correspondence filed on November 6, 2007, a Sixth IDS. The documents identified on modified Form PTO-1449 of the Sixth IDS were presented/cited during the prosecution of a Japanese patent application corresponding or relating to the above-referenced patent application.

Again, for the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the Sixth IDS (including Form PTO-1449) is attached hereto. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner make his consideration of the references identified in the Sixth IDS formally of record with the next action.

Seventh Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant has submitted, in a separate correspondence filed concurrently herewith, a Seventh IDS. The documents listed on the modified Form PTO-1449 of the Seventh IDS were identified by the Examiner during the prosecution of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/477,299.

Again, for the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the Seventh IDS (including Form PTO-1449) is attached hereto. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner make his consideration of the references identified in the Seventh IDS formally of record with the next action.

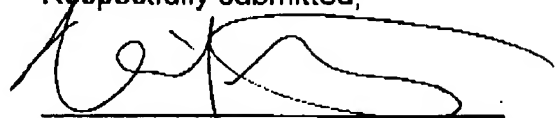
CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests entry of the foregoing amendments and reconsideration of the application. Applicant submits that all of the pending claims present patentable subject matter. Accordingly, allowance of all of the claims is respectfully requested.

It is noted that should a telephone interview expedite the prosecution of this application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number identified below.

Date: December 7, 2007

Respectfully submitted,



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